

# **California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**For immediate release  
July 21, 2005**

### **CALIFORNIA COMMEMORATES FOUR DECADES OF SERVICE TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME AND THEIR FAMILIES**

SACRAMENTO -- California's Victim Compensation Program today commemorated 40 years of service as the nation's pioneer state in victim compensation. Since 1965, the state program has helped nearly 900,000 victims and their family members, and paid out more than \$1.5 billion to eligible crime victims and those who provide services to them.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed July 21, 2005 as "Victim Compensation Program Day in California." The theme of today's celebration at the Tsakapoulos Library Galleria in Sacramento was "Honoring the work we do and those who make it happen." A special commemorative DVD (video montage) highlighted accomplishments and significant events from the last 40 years.

"I am very proud of this Program, its achievements, and the help that it has provided to so many victims of crime and their loved ones throughout California," said Fred Aguiar, Secretary, State and Consumer Services Agency, and Chair of the three-member Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board. "Employees may take special pride in the success of the program. By helping victims of crime and paying tribute to all those who dedicate their lives to serving them, we can make our communities stronger and more secure."

The Honorable Lois Haight, Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge gave the keynote address. Judge Haight served the Reagan Administration as chair of the 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, resulting in the creation of the Office for Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice. Under her leadership, the well being of the people of California and the nation has prospered.

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Aguiar and fellow board member Michael A. Ramos, San Bernardino County District Attorney, acknowledged the accomplishments of the last four decades and paid tribute to the Board's employees who work diligently every day to assist crime victims and their families. Deputy State Controller Windie Scott represented board member and State Controller Steve Westly at today's event.

Over the years, state and local governments, working with victim support organizations, have provided crucial services to California's crime victims and their families. More than 100 victim assistance centers in 58 California counties help crime victims obtain compensation. The Program has joint power agreements with 21 counties to process victims' claims at the local level.

The Victim Compensation Program provides reimbursement to eligible victims and their families for medical and dental treatment, mental health counseling, payment for loss of wages, job retraining, and funeral/burial expenses incurred as the result of a crime. Helping victims cope with the physical, emotional, and financial impacts of crime is a critical and core component of justice in California and the nation.

"California's commitment to victims of crime is even stronger today. Eligibility for compensation includes help for California residents regardless of where in the world the crime occurred and for nonresidents who become victims of violent crime within the state of California," said Karen McGagin, executive officer of the Board. "Our great state, possessing the foresight and vision to help those affected by violent crime looks forward to the challenges that still remain while reflecting upon the many accomplishments of the past four decades."

For more, including information on claims received and compensation paid in each of California's 58 counties, please contact Fran Clader, Communications Director, at (916) 323-2957. Information is also available on the Board's website at [www.victimcompensation.ca.gov](http://www.victimcompensation.ca.gov).

**###**

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